

Satirists like Juvenal or moralists like TACITUS (2)
are no more to be accepted as authority, without caution,
than rosy wits and scolding preachers for our own day.

On the whole, the first two centuries show a steady
gain, even if we look only at pagan society. The
LETTERS OF PLINY reveal, in the court circle itself, a
society high-minded, refined, and virtuous. Pliny
is a type of the finest gentlemen of to-day, in
delicacy of feeling, sensitive-horn, genial and
thoughtful courtesy. Marcus Aurelius and his
father illustrate like qualities on the throne. EPICURETUS
shows them in slavery. All these people are

surrounded by friends whom they think good and happy. One husband inscribed upon his wife's monument: "Only once did she cause me sorrow - and that was by her death." Another praise in his wife "purity, loyalty, affection, a sense of duty, a gentle nature, and whatever other qualities God would wish to give women." The tombstone of a poor physician declares that "to all the needy who came to him, he gave his services free of charge." Over the grave of a little girl there is inscribed: "She rests here in the soft cradle of the Earth... comely, charming, keen of mind, gay in her talk & play. If there be aught of Compassion in the gods, bear her aloft to the stars and the light."